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A survey to determine the acceptability of a merit pay system in the Bellevue public schools

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A SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE ACCEPTABILITY
OF A MERIT PAY SYSTEM IN THE
BEYOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Field Study
Presented to the
Department of Educational Administration
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

James Edward Marsicek

July 1970

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Accepted for the faculty of The Graduate College of
the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree Specialist in Education.

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James Edward Marsicek

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In September, 1968, the Board of Education of the Bellevue Public School System approved a new salary schedule for their teachers which represented a substantial increase (about 10-12%) for all staff positions. This generous increment made the schedule, in the opinion of the Board, much more competitive with other school systems in the suburban area and in the state. The Board attached one proviso to its approval, however, charging the teachers to examine merit pay and evaluation as they relate to the faculty, and to present the findings and recommendations to the Board. Such a study was conducted and on November 20, 1968, the report was submitted. It stated:

The staff has surveyed articles and books on merit rating, merit pay, and incentive programs in industry, business, and education. The literature is full of detailed discussions of programs which have failed, programs which seemingly are successful, and the advantages and disadvantages of merit rating and merit pay as they relate to teachers. Little has been written about merit pay programs for teachers in education; most programs concern themselves with management in industry.¹

The staff included in its report, recommendations that it meet with a subcommittee of the Board and made the

¹Faculty and Staff, Bellevue School System. Merit Pay Proposal, submitted to the Board of Education, November 20, 1968.

following statement:

At this time the staff is neither for nor against merit pay----the literature points out both advantages and disadvantages. The literature stresses the need for each district to study merit pay for itself, and if it desires, to construct a plan according to its own needs, climate, and ability to pay.

It is, therefore, the opinion of the faculty that greatest benefits for the district can be achieved through the study of a merit pay program. The outcome of such a study would dictate succeeding steps.²

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. To determine the acceptability of a Merit Pay System in the Bellevue Public Schools as viewed by the Certified Staff and the Administration.

During the past year, the faculty of the Bellevue Public Schools was asked to study the advantages and disadvantages of Merit Pay. The results of the study and the conclusions drawn would determine whether or not Merit Pay would be adopted by the Bellevue Public School System.

Importance of the study. The results of this study could be of great help to any student, board of education, or faculty member studying the acceptability of a Merit Pay System for their school system. Bellevue, because of its

²Faculty and Staff, Bellevue School System. Merit Pay Proposal, submitted to the Board of Education, November 20, 1968.

study, became aware that its system is not ready to adopt the Merit Pay System. As a school system, it benefited from the many suggestions and proposals made by its certified staff members.

Limitations of the study.

1. The study included only the Bellevue Public School System.
2. The evaluation questionnaire was given only to sixty certified staff members and ten administrators in the Bellevue Public School System.
3. The study included only the certified staff members and administrators in the Bellevue System who had more than one year of teaching or administrative experience.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

In order to remain consistent throughout this field study, several definitions are given which pertain to the course of study.

Merit Pay. A procedure for differentiating salaries, on the basis of demonstrated performance in relation to the functions assigned to the individual teacher.

Additional pay for an additional assignment or for a different position does not qualify, under the definition, as merit pay; thus, a merit award of additional salary based on

some evaluation or rating system. Therefore, the second definition required is:

Evaluation. A systematic means of determining the performance level of a teacher in relation to his specific assignment.

Administrator. A person in the public school system whose position is not directly related to an academic department, who does not have tenure prerogatives, and is answerable for his responsibilities either directly to the chief administrator or the Board of Education.

III. PROCEDURE

The procedure followed in this study consisted of several parts in order to encompass the diverse and complex nature of the problem and to overcome the lack of current information on the subject. It should be understood, however, that no attempt was made to conduct a broad-scale study which would bring massive amounts of data to bear upon the subject. The first step, then, was to examine literature regarding the subject, both in the field of education, and in the writings about business and industry.

Secondly, questionnaires were sent to administrators and faculty members of the Bellevue Public Schools to obtain their opinions on a Merit Pay System and Evaluation Program.

Most of this study, it should be emphasized, deals with the issue as it relates to the K-12 public school program, with very little concentration on or pertinence to the college level. The lock-step system of faculty salary schedules, with specified increments between steps and levels, in some ways mitigates the concept of merit pay; and the tenure policy in higher education greatly minimizes the rationale for constant evaluation of faculty.

The study has been arranged in the following manner: Chapter II contains a brief review of related literature; Chapter III encompasses the methods and procedures and the data obtained from the investigation; and Chapter IV is a brief summary of the findings of the study and of any recommendations which have been made.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Discussions about Merit Pay and Evaluation of personnel in all levels of education are never at a standstill. It would seem there is a constant murmur about such programs, and intermittently a peak period of interest in which an intense examination of possibilities is necessitated. Generally, the issue centers around incentive awards to faculty with three objectives in the minds of those individuals or groups proposing such a program: 1) recognition of individual initiative, 2) the need for instructional improvement, and 3) the recruitment and retention of superior teachers.³

The idea of formal merit pay began basically with the "piece work" approach to production. The more the worker could produce, the more he received for his effort. The less capable performers settled for lower wages or else accelerated their output to gain increases. Its zenith was probably epitomized by the Lincoln Plan⁴ which received considerable attention in the late 1930's and early 1940's.

³James P. Steffensen. Merit Salary Programs, Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1962, p. 8.

⁴James F. Lincoln, Lincoln's Incentive System, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1946.

However, managers and executives could not be rewarded in quite the same manner, and various other "incentives" were devised for them. These include stock options, bonuses, cars, country club memberships, increased expense accounts, homes, and a variety of other devices. These same incentives, of course, are used frequently to "lure" executives from other firms.

Financial rewards, however, have not brought about desired results, even on the executive level. The researchers who contributed reports compiled by Whisler and Harper⁵ verify these findings and are substantiated by many. Newman states:

Several studies of human motivation have shown that the use of financial income as an incentive has been over-rated; there are other considerations that may be more important in some circumstances.⁶

All are agreed that the basic salary is really the important issue at hand. In and of itself, the pay scale must be at a level which honestly rewards the talents of the individual and will attract the type of executives desired.

Until about 1900, salaries of public school teachers were dependent primarily upon the bargaining power of the individual and the judgment of the administration and school

⁵S. Harper and Thomas Whisler (eds.), Performance Appraisal. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962, p. 38.

⁶William H. Newman, Administrative Action. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956, p. 449.

board members. Some states and individual school systems still operate without salary schedules. To some, these earlier arrangements might be considered merit.

One of the first Merit Plans was adopted in 1908 at Newton, Massachusetts. Its application was reduced until 1920, when it ceased to exist. In 1947, however, Newton operated on the merit basis.

Many of the first salary schedules operated on the merit basis. In 1911 the New York State Legislature had a type of merit pay which was similar to its merit salary law of 1947.

Ithaca, New York gave attention to merit pay in 1919, and at the present time has one of the most updated merit plans in the United States. The new plan was instigated in 1963 because of a feeling that merit pay, based entirely on teacher evaluation, does not work. Instead of the single evaluation, the new plan has three major phases consisting of:

1. Training and Experience 20%
2. Evaluation. 40%
3. Professional Growth 40%

Some people have the misconception that merit pay has invaded only the small schools; however, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Detroit, Kansas City, and Milwaukee had merit plans prior to 1930. Currently, the trend toward merit is generally lagging in the large cities.

Since the time periods mentioned above, merit plans generally have continued. At present, the N.E.A. Research Division reports that of the 2,005 teachers' schedules reported, about five percent specified a superior service award. This percentage has decreased. In 1938-1939, 20.4% of school districts reported using a "superior service maximum".⁷

In order to explain the acceptance and rejection of merit pay, we must know its advantages and disadvantages. The expression "merit pay" is one of the most controversial in the field of education. It seems there is no easier way to start a debate than to venture an opinion on this subject. Those who argue the positive side of the issue have stated some of the following advantages:

1. Teachers should be paid for what they are worth and for quality of work done.
2. Merit rating provides incentive for wanting to improve.
3. Merit rating will tend to draw and hold "superior" teachers.
4. The present system tends to give security to incompetents and poor teachers.
5. Relating salary to competence will promote morale in teachers.
6. The community is more willing to pay for education when better teaching is developed.

⁷N.E.A., Research Bulletin, 39, No. 2 (May 1961): pp. 61-62.

7. The merit plan keeps the better teachers in the classroom and does not make it necessary for them to seek administrative positions in order to obtain greater remuneration.

Those who feel that merit pay has too many disadvantages often state those listed below:

1. Evaluation is not accurate--too subjective.
2. Evaluation takes time which could better be used to improve teaching.
3. Merit Pay reduces staff morale, and working relationships.
4. Limitations on numbers who can be promoted cause differences between outstanding teachers, and also causes younger teachers to wait for openings in quotas.
5. Merit Pay stereotypes teachers to standards, thus discouraging creative teaching.
6. Merit Pay tends to worsen working conditions (tensions, worry, and strain at rating periods).
7. Teacher preparation institutions should be more selective in choosing candidates for teacher preparation programs.
8. Emphasis should be on developing all teachers to become better rather than rewarding or punishing a few.⁸

As one weighs the advantages and disadvantages of Merit Pay, it becomes evident that the principle of merit is quite widely accepted, but the practice is condemned. There are four major concerns: (1) Can an instrument be devised that will measure the quality of teaching performance?

⁸Glen F. Ovard, "Teachers Merit Rating", The American School Board Journal, October 1959, p. 37.

(2) What factors should be included? (3) How and by whom should merit rating measures be administered? (4) What will be the harmful effects on teacher morale and thus teacher efficiency? The advocates of merit rating would quickly point out that there are also many problems in the present system of equal pay for unequal work.

Teacher reaction toward Merit Pay is generally one of opposition, according to reports from the National Education Association, Department of Classroom Teachers. The N.E.A. many times has stated that it is strongly opposed to merit rating as a solution to improving instruction. It, in turn, favors a salary schedule high enough to attract persons of professional caliber.

In areas where Merit Pay is in effect, the reaction is generally favorable, even by teachers who do not qualify for merit rating. They usually state many of the advantages and disadvantages already listed.

The reaction to Merit Pay by board members and lay groups is perhaps more favorable and is also the best in comparison with teachers and school administrators. The Association of National School Boards has indicated that merit rating is acceptable in principle, but expressed some doubt regarding practical application.

The interest of administrators regarding Merit Pay is quite high, as recent American Association of School

Administrators conventions have shown. They seem to be quite divided on the merit issue, but realize that it is a subject with which they must concern themselves.

An interesting National Education Association study found that "management experts are divided on the desirability of merit ratings". The report states:

No evidence supports the popular assumption that business and industry universally and successfully use merit rating to fix salaries.

Merit rating as a basis of fixing pay is used by considerably less than half of the business and industrial firms.

The firms that use merit ratings are most likely to use them for manual workers; fewer use them for clerical workers; and still fewer use them for administrative and professional workers.

Studies of the use of merit rating in industry show relatively low measures of reliability and validity.⁹

The Merit Plan can be justified if attention is given to some of the factors which are basic to the operation of a plan wherever it may be used.

The Merit Plan varies in its operational function because it must meet the needs of the staff and the community.

In addition to the types of operations, there are certain standard requirements that seem to be necessary to establish a basically sound merit program. Some of the

⁹N.E.A., Research Bulletin, 39, No. 1 (February 1960) p. 16.

suggested guidelines are:

1. A basic salary schedule well above the average.
2. A willingness on the part of teachers, administrators, and board members to work together in developing the plan and the evaluative procedure.
3. A common understanding of the objectives of the school system.
4. An understanding that no percentage ratio will be placed on the higher salaries.
5. A willingness to try a plan and revise it if need be after more study.
6. Care in selecting the areas to be used in evaluating teacher competence.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The following procedure was used by the writer in the analysis of the questionnaires sent to sixty certified staff teachers and ten administrators in the Bellevue Public School System. The response from the staff teachers and the administrators represented an 83% and 100% return, respectively.

Part I of the questionnaire dealt with certified staff evaluation and evaluation procedures used in the Bellevue Public Schools.

TABLE I

RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
WHEN ASKED IF THERE IS A MEANS OF
STAFF EVALUATION IN THEIR SYSTEM

Response	Administration	Faculty	Total
Yes	10	50	60
Undecided	0	0	0
No	0	0	0
Total	10	50	60

As indicated above, the Bellevue administrators and faculty all responded that there is a means of staff evaluation in their system.

TABLE II

RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
AND FACULTY AS TO WHO CONDUCTS THE STAFF
EVALUATIONS IN THEIR SCHOOL SYSTEM

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Department Heads	0	0	0
Principal	10	50	60
Teacher Committee	0	0	0
Superintendent	0	0	0
Total	10	50	60

Ten administrators and fifty teachers all responded that the building principal conducts all staff evaluations.

TABLE III

RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND
FACULTY TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EVALUATION
FORM USED FOR STAFF EVALUATIONS

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	1	11	12
Undecided	2	9	11
No	7	30	37
Total	10	50	60

As shown above, there seemed to be mixed reactions by both administrators and teachers as to the effectiveness of the evaluation form being used.

TABLE IV
RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
WHEN ASKED IF THEY WOULD BE IN FAVOR OF A
NEW EVALUATION FORM TO BE USED
FOR STAFF EVALUATIONS

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	10	33	43
Undecided	0	12	12
No	0	5	5
Total	10	50	60

The majority of positive response indicates that a new evaluation form, for staff evaluations, should be used in the Bellevue Public Schools.

TABLE V
RESPONSE OF ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY AS TO THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROCEDURE USED FOR STAFF
EVALUATION IN THE BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Effective	5	9	14
Undecided	3	10	13
Not Effective	2	31	33
Total	10	50	60

The majority of administrators felt that the procedure used for staff evaluations was effective; however, the majority of faculty members responded negatively.

TABLE VI
 OPINION OF ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY ON WHETHER
 THE CURRENT PROCEDURE FOR STAFF EVALUATION
 STRENGTHENS STAFF MORALE

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	6	4	10
Undecided	4	10	14
No	0	36	36
Total	10	50	60

Again the administrators and teachers disagreed on whether the current procedure for staff evaluation strengthens staff morale. The majority of administrators responded "yes", and the majority of faculty members responded "no".

TABLE VII
REACTION OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
ON DROPPING THE PRESENT EVALUATION
PROCEDURE AT THEIR SCHOOL

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	3	26	29
Undecided	3	15	18
No	4	9	13
Total	10	50	60

As shown in Table VII, the majority of administrators and teachers are in favor of dropping the present evaluation procedure at their school.

TABLE VIII
RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
TO INITIATING A NEW EVALUATION PROGRAM
IN THEIR SCHOOL

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	6	29	35
Undecided	3	12	15
No	1	9	10
Total	10	50	60

The majority of positive responses by both administrators and faculty members indicated that they would be in favor of initiating a new evaluation program at their school.

TABLE IX
RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
TO WHO SHOULD CONDUCT A NEWLY INITIATED
EVALUATION PROGRAM

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Department Heads	0	7	7
Principal	3	1	4
Teacher Committee	1	21	22
Teacher-Principal	2	0	2
Superintendent	0	0	0
Total	6	29	35

The administrators seemed to be a little undecided on who should conduct the new evaluation program.

TABLE X
 RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
 AS TO WHETHER OR NOT ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD
 BE EVALUATED BY FACULTY MEMBERS WORKING
 UNDER THEIR ADMINISTRATION

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	8	43	51
Undecided	0	3	3
No	2	4	6
Total	10	50	60

As shown on Table X, the majority of administrators and faculty members were in favor of administrators being evaluated by faculty members working under their administration.

The administrators and teachers who responded "yes" as shown on Table X, page 23, were asked to respond to the following question: Who should conduct the administrative evaluations?

TABLE XI
RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
AS TO WHO SHOULD CONDUCT THE
ADMINISTRATIVE EVALUATIONS

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Department Heads	0	1	1
Teacher Committee	3	13	16
Each Teacher	5	29	34
Total	8	43	51

TABLE XII
 RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
 AS TO WHETHER OR NOT EVALUATIONS OF THE
 ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF SHOULD BE MADE
 AVAILABLE TO TEACHERS

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	3	26	29
Undecided	1	12	13
No	6	12	18
Total	10	50	60

The majority of administrators, as shown in Table XII, indicated that administrative evaluations should not be made available to teachers. The teachers, on the other hand, felt that evaluations of administrators should be made available.

The last question on evaluation dealt with the criteria on which the evaluation of school personnel should be based. Each administrator and faculty member was asked to list at least three main criteria on which evaluations should be based. The ten administrators listed competency in teaching, cooperation with school personnel, and professionalism as their main criteria for evaluation of certified staff members under their administration.

The administrators also listed the three criteria which they felt were important for administrative evaluations: Organization, ability to plan and carry through, and professionalism.

The faculty felt their evaluations should be based on lesson preparation, effective teaching, and class organization. They felt that administrators should be evaluated on their control over the school, degree of communication with teachers, and their knowledge of curriculum.

Part II of the questionnaire dealt specifically with Merit Pay and how acceptable it might be in the Bellevue Public Schools. The first reaction to Merit Pay by the Bellevue administrative staff and faculty is found on Table XIII, page 27.

TABLE XIII
REACTION OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD BE IN FAVOR
OF A MERIT PAY SYSTEM IN THE
BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	3	16	19
Undecided	3	11	13
No	4	23	27
Total	10	50	60

There appears to be mixed reactions by both groups on the above question. A slight majority of both faculty and administrators feel that they would not want a Merit Pay system in the Bellevue Public Schools.

TABLE XIV
RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
TO MERIT PAY AS AN INCENTIVE TO
BETTER TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	4	14	18
Undecided	2	11	13
No	4	25	19
Total	10	50	60

As shown on Table XIV, the majority of administrators and teachers did not feel that Merit Pay was an incentive to better teacher performance.

TABLE XV
 RESPONSE OF ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY AS TO
 WHETHER OR NOT A MERIT PAY SYSTEM COULD BE
 JUSTLY AND EFFECTIVELY ADMINISTERED
 IN THE BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	1	3	4
Undecided	5	17	22
No	4	30	34
Total	10	50	60

It is apparent from the responses that both groups felt that a Merit Pay System could not be justly and effectively administered in the Bellevue Public Schools.

TABLE XVI

RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY
AS TO WHO SHOULD ADMINISTER THE MERIT
PAY SYSTEM IN THE BELLEVUE SCHOOLS

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Teacher Committee	0	5	5
Principal	0	4	4
Teacher-principal Team	9	41	50
Total	9	50	59

The administration of the Merit Pay System produced no clear-cut agreement as to what person or what group should be responsible. The majority of both groups agreed on the teacher-principal team to carry out the allocation of Merit Pay.

TABLE XVII

RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY TO THE
QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE CURRENT BELLEVUE
PUBLIC SCHOOL SALARY SCHEDULE IS COMPETITIVE
WITH OTHER SYSTEMS IN THE AREA

Response	Administrators	Faculty	Total
Yes	9	39	48
Undecided	0	3	3
No	1	8	9
Total	10	50	60

The last item on the questionnaire dealt with incentives other than Merit Pay that might influence the administrators as well as the teaching faculty. The writer wished to find out which item--high financial income; social status and respect; attractive work and environment; personal power and influence; opportunity for development; voice in own affairs; or just and diligent supervision--rated the highest as an incentive item to the majority of administrators and teachers in this study.

TABLE XVIII

RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE FACULTY TO THE INCENTIVES
THEY FEEL WOULD BEST MOTIVATE A MEMBER
OF THE TEACHING STAFF*

	Priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
High financial income		26	10	2	11	6	4	
Social status and respect		2	2	7	6	15	12	5
Attractive work and environment		14	12	1	10	5	4	1
Personal power and influence		0	2	5	0	1	5	35
Opportunity for development		5	12	7	13	5	4	3
Voice in own affairs		2	7	18	8	10	4	2
Just and diligent supervision		1	3	10	2	8	17	5
Total		50	50	50	50	50	50	50

*Each response was rated in a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 order of priority, with "1" being highest.

High financial income seems to be the "1" item of priority as far as faculty members are concerned.

TABLE XIX
 RESPONSE OF BELLEVUE ADMINISTRATORS TO THE
 INCENTIVES THEY FEEL WOULD BEST MOTIVATE
 A MEMBER OF THE TEACHING STAFF*

	Priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
High financial income		2	1	1	4	0	1	1
Social status and respect		0	2	0	0	1	5	2
Attractive work and environment		2	0	3	1	4	1	0
Personal power and influence		1	0	0	0	0	2	7
Opportunity for development		1	3	3	2	0	0	0
Voice in own affairs		4	2	0	3	1	0	0
Just and diligent supervision		0	2	3	0	4	1	0
Total		10	10	10	10	10	10	10

*Each response was rated in a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 order of priority, with "1" being high.

The administrators seemed to favor the incentive item "voice in own affairs" as their number one item of priority.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the acceptability of Merit Pay and Evaluation System in the Bellevue Public Schools.

The study was done by reading and compiling related literature, distributing questionnaires to ten administrators and fifty teachers in the Bellevue Public Schools and tabulating the results. After a careful analysis of all the data collected, it appears that the Bellevue Public School System is not yet ready to adopt the Merit Pay System.

CONCLUSIONS

From the results of the survey the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The Merit Pay System could not be justly and effectively administered in the Bellevue Public Schools.
2. The question of who is to evaluate the teachers cannot be agreed upon.
3. Not enough schools have researched the problem of Merit Pay. It is evident that the issue is clouded by the lack of understanding about the plan and how it works.
4. The majority of teachers wish to drop the present evaluation program and establish a new program.
5. The majority of faculty members do not believe Merit Pay would be applicable as an incentive to better teacher performance.

6. The administrators in the survey are all in favor of using a new evaluation form.

The administration and faculty of the Bellevue Public School System felt there was no need for the Merit Pay Plan. The Bellevue Public Schools' faculty turnover is too great for the Merit Plan. Bellevue, serving an Air Force community, is unique from the standpoint that its teachers do not generally stay in the system for a very long period of time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem of Merit Pay will probably remain for a long time. Implementing such a policy in Bellevue at this time would be difficult. It also seems unwise to dismiss it entirely only because of the difficulty of evaluation. Many states are carrying on studies of merit rating and educators are working on an evaluation procedure that will be more applicable to the system. Perhaps these studies will influence most people in the field of education to cast their vote for the Merit Pay Plan instead of continuing as a hung jury in the case of the controversial Merit Pay Plan.

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APPENDIX

Logan Fontenelle Junior High
Bellevue, Nebraska

Dear Colleague:

As a part of a research project for my Ed.S. in Educational Administration, I am writing to a number of educators in order to obtain information on the acceptability of a Merit Pay System in the Bellevue Public Schools.

In order to remain consistent throughout this questionnaire, several definitions are supplied which pertain to this study.

Merit Pay. A procedure for differentiating salaries, on the basis of demonstrated performance, in relation to the functions assigned to the individual teacher.

Additional pay for an additional assignment does not qualify, under the definition, as merit pay; thus, a merit award of additional salary based on some evaluation or rating system. Therefore, the second definition required is:

Evaluation. A means of determining performance level of a teacher in relation to his specific assignment.

Please take a few minutes to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. The information gained from this study will be of great help to any student, board of education, or faculty studying the acceptability of the merit pay system for their school district.

Your prompt reply will be appreciated. No names will be used in this research report so feel free to write any additional comments or qualifications to any of your answers.

If you would like a copy of the results of this questionnaire, please write your name and address at the bottom of this questionnaire. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

James E. Marsicek

QUESTIONNAIRE
ON
MERIT PAY AND EVALUATION

Part I--Evaluation

1. Is there a means of staff evaluation in your school?
yes_____ undecided_____ no_____
2. If yes:
 - a) Who conducts the evaluation?
_____Department Heads
_____Principal
_____Teacher Committee
_____Superintendent
3. Do you feel an effective evaluation form is used?
yes_____ undecided_____ no_____
4. Would you be in favor of a new evaluation form used in your school system?
yes_____ undecided_____ no_____
5. Do you feel that the procedure for staff evaluation at your school is effective?
yes_____ undecided_____ no_____
6. In your opinion, does the current procedure for evaluation strengthen staff morale?
yes_____ undecided_____ no_____
7. Would you prefer to drop the present evaluation procedure at your school?
yes_____ undecided_____ no_____

8. Would you like to start a new evaluation program in your school?

yes _____ undecided _____ no _____

9. If yes:

a) Who should conduct such an evaluation?

_____ Department Heads

_____ Principal

_____ Teacher Committee

_____ Superintendent

10. The administrators in the Bellevue Public Schools are evaluated by the Superintendent of Schools. Do you feel that administrators should also be evaluated by teachers?

yes _____ undecided _____ no _____

11. If yes:

a) Who should conduct the evaluation?

_____ Department Heads

_____ Teacher Committee

_____ Each Teacher

12. Teacher evaluations are made available to administrators. Do you feel that evaluations of the administrative staff should be made available to teachers?

yes _____ undecided _____ no _____

13. Would you list at least three main criteria on which you feel evaluation of school personnel should be based?

Certified staff

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Administrative staff

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Part II--Merit Pay

1. Do you feel that the Bellevue Public Schools should have a Merit Pay System?

yes_____ undecided_____ no_____

2. Do you feel Merit Pay would encourage teachers to perform more effectively?

yes_____ undecided_____ no_____

3. Do you feel a Merit Pay System could be justly and effectively administered in the Bellevue Public School System?

yes_____ undecided_____ no_____

4. Do you feel that the existing teacher salary schedule in Bellevue is competitive with other school systems in the area?

yes_____ undecided_____ no_____

5. If teacher evaluation were to be a part of a merit pay program, who should conduct this evaluation?

_____Teacher Committee

_____Principal

_____Teacher-principal Team

_____Superintendent

6. If no evaluation is involved, please state briefly how merit raises could be administered.

7. What incentives do you feel would best motivate you as a member of the teaching staff? Please use the checklist, rating your responses in a 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., priority.

_____ High financial income
_____ Social status and respect
_____ Attractive work and environment
_____ Personal power and influence
_____ Opportunity for development
_____ Voice in your own affairs
_____ Just and diligent supervision